



CONGRESSMAN EARL BLUMENAUER CONGRESSMAN GREG WALDEN MOUNT HOOD LEGISLATIVE CONCEPTS

Congressman Greg Walden and Congressman Earl Blumenauer propose the following concepts as the foundation for bipartisan legislation. We aim to work cooperatively with the Oregon delegation to move this legislation forward during the second session of the 109th Congress. This is an important step in a long-term process to address the many challenges facing Mt. Hood and the Mt. Hood National Forest now and into the future. Not only is Mt. Hood Oregon's scenic icon, but it also provides numerous recreational opportunities, timber and clean water, wilderness sanctuary and vast amount of diverse habitat. This treasure deserves no less than our full and ongoing commitment to address its many needs.

Below are key areas of focus, followed by statements of guiding principles. The proposal establishes, for the first time, a framework for public involvement in addressing the needs of the Mountain. The bullet points identify specific, proposed actions.

Wilderness, Wild & Scenic Rivers: The proposal identifies opportunities to increase the Mt. Hood National Forest's Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers inventory. These designations would not reduce the amount of timber emphasis matrix where most timber harvest would be conducted, nor would they deliberately result in future land management conflicts. Any landowners with private holdings incorporated by the designations would be granted full access to their lands.

- **Wilderness:** Add approximately 75,000 acres of Wilderness, a 40% increase of designated wilderness on Mt. Hood and the first new wilderness on the mountain in 21 years.
Proposed wilderness designations include:
 - Bull of the Woods Additions
 - Big Bottom
 - Gorge Ridgeline
 - Mt. Hood additions: Mazama/Top Spur, Elk Cove, Sandy area
 - Roaring River
 - Salmon-Huckleberry Additions: Eagle Creek, Alder Creek
 - Cooper Spur (pending land exchange – provide Forest Service authority to conduct forest health activities prior to area entering into federally designated wilderness)
- **Wild and Scenic Rivers:** Add an estimated 15 miles of Wild and Scenic Rivers, a 12% increase to Mt. Hood's Wild and Scenic Rivers network.
 - Hood River, Middle Fork
 - ZigZag River Upper Reach
 - Portions of Eagle Creek

Recreation - Recreation is a dynamic social and economic component of Mt. Hood's legacy. Existing development footprints are the best places to enhance recreational opportunities and maximize future potential.

- **Special Use Fee Retention:** Create a special use fee retention program that would enable the Mt. Hood National Forest to retain 100% of the unobligated special use permit fees and rents collected on the mountain to improve existing, and develop new, opportunities for recreation.
- **Recreation Advisory Council:** Establish a Recreational Advisory Council, comprised of local stakeholders to advise the Forest Service on planning for future recreation enhancements and dispersal of retained funds, though decision-making authority would continue to rest with the Forest Service. The Recreational Advisory Council would focus on maintaining and improving existing campgrounds, hiking trails, mountain bike and OHV trail systems; maintaining and improving personal sanitation facilities where appropriate; and preparing NEPA compliance documents. The Council would consist of 12 members representing the following: (1) winter motorized recreation, such as snowmobiling; (2) winter non-motorized recreation, such as snowshoeing, skiing, and snowboarding; (3) summer motorized recreation, such as OHV; (4) summer non-motorized recreation, such as hiking, horseback riding; (5) hunting and fishing; (6) local environmental groups; (7) permitted ski areas; (8) State of Oregon; (9) affected Native American tribes; (10) local government interests; (11) forest products industry, (12) mountain bikers
- **Road Use Adapted:** Require the Forest Service to determine, where appropriate, Forest Service roads slated for closure or decommissioning could be adapted for use as single track trails for mountain bikes or to enhance other recreational opportunities. This should be a public process, involving local recreational and other stakeholders.
- **Enhanced Disability Access:** Provide authority and funding for the Forest Service to enter into a partnership with the Northwest Youth Corp to site and construct a specially designed trail for disabled persons access needs.

Transportation - A transportation network that brings people to and from Mt. Hood and safely transports people from place to place on the mountain is an essential piece of infrastructure that requires a holistic vision and long term focus.

- **Mt. Hood Transportation Authority:** Create a Mt. Hood Transportation and Planning Authority to synthesize existing transportation plans, prioritize projects, and identify revenue sources. The Authority would enable the Forest Service, area ski resorts, Government Camp, and county governments a formal body to present management plans to ensure most efficient plans are coordinated. The Transportation and Planning Authority would be directed to prepare, within two years of enactment of this act, an integrated, multi-modal transportation plan to meet the transportation demands in 2025 sustainably, while promoting economic development, preserving ecological functions and scenic vistas, and enhancing public safety. The plan shall specifically evaluate:
 - Transportation alternatives, including a potential gondola corridor connection between the major ski and recreation areas on the Mountain. Priority would be given to a connection between Government Camp and Timberline Lodge.

- The need for and options to provide additional parking in or around Government Camp, in conjunction with improved “Park and Ride” facilities for lower valley communities.
- The need for and options to provide an intermodal transportation center in or around Government Camp to link public transportation, parking, and key recreation destinations.
- Designation, maintenance and needed improvement of alternative routes on Forest Service Roads for use in case of emergency on the state highway system.
- Reconstruction of Highway 35 from Mineral Creek to Baseline Road to address ongoing debris flow “hot spots.”
- Funding mechanisms to implement key components of the transportation plan and construction of projects. These would then be authorized and funded through future federal transportation funding packages, for which local and State matches would be encouraged.
- Emergency Response: The Authority would also be directed to work with federal, state and local emergency service providers to prepare an integrated emergency response plan for all hazards and create a funding mechanism to ensure future service delivery.

Forest Stewardship and Watershed Health - The health of trees and watersheds on the Mt. Hood National Forest varies with geography, elevation, and climate. It is essential that local partners and the Forest Service manage these areas in a transparent and open manner that is in the public interest and builds long term trust.

- **Forest Stewardship Plan:** Require the Forest Service to work with counties, the State, Native American Tribes, local communities and key stakeholders to develop and begin to implement, within one year of enactment, a 10-year plan using existing authorities to address bug infested, disease ridden and heavily overstocked trees in federally designated class II/III lands. This plan should involve improved mapping of these areas. The intent of the plan is to significantly improve these areas to condition class I forest health condition class.
- **Biomass Generation Study:** Direct Forest Service to assess amount of woody debris available on the Forest for biomass energy generation.
- **Watershed Management MOU's:** Watershed stewardship must be based on collaboration and cooperation between the Forest Service and local jurisdictions. Where Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) or legislative authorities do not currently exist between irrigation districts or municipalities and the Forest Service, the Forest Service would be directed to enter into MOU's that outline stewardship goals to manage for water quality and water quantity. The MOU's would encourage adaptability, establish benchmarks, and ensure that watersheds are monitored for stewardship access. These MOU's could also restrict public access and, where appropriate, would allow for consultation with other stakeholders, such as permitted ski areas.

Tribal Relationships - Our public meetings and 41- mile hike around Mt. Hood last summer demonstrated the utmost importance of upholding the rights of Native Americans to gather huckleberries and other First Foods in their accustomed manner.

- **First Foods Initiative**: Require the Forest Service to enter into Memorandums of Understanding with Native Americans to provide for huckleberry picking and other customary and traditional harvesting of First Foods by Native Americans and to ensure healthy stands of huckleberries and other traditional plant species. MOU's would account for the special access needs of elders in compliance with current environmental laws and land management designations.

Community Development –The future development on the Mountain should occur in areas where infrastructure already exists. These areas, could potentially include the footprints of Government Camp, Ski Bowl, Timberline, Mt. Hood Meadows, and lands allocated A-11 under the approved forest plan. In addition, there are special and unique circumstances where land exchanges can be employed to resolve pending issues and benefit the public good.

- **Land Exchange Authorizations**: Closely examine a number of proposed land exchanges on the mountain. The consensus agreement between Mt. Hood Meadows and the Hood River Residents Committee will be strongly considered, although legislation may modify this agreement. The process would involve the parties and other affected stakeholders to advance the land exchange in a way that is equitable and balanced. Other proposed exchanges, including those in the Port of Cascade Locks, and Clackamas County may also fall within the scope of this proposal and will be given full consideration.
- **Disaster Resistant Development**: Future development would conform to disaster resistant guidelines, such as fire-safe building codes.

Local Government to Federal Government relationships- The next century of challenges for Mt. Hood and those who live in its proximity are great, and we recognize the central role of local governments in managing for issues dealing with the natural and developed environments.

- **Local Government Coordination**: Encourage cooperation with Mt. Hood's local communities, counties, the State, the Tribes, and federal agencies to identify common ground, coordinate planning efforts around the Mountain, and make the federal government a better partner in building cooperative and lasting solutions.